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## PA-C : Who, What, Where, and How?

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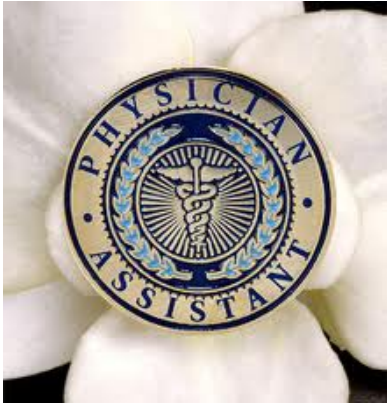
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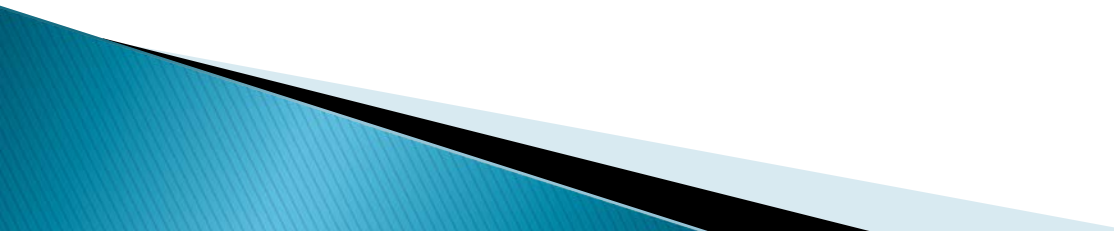
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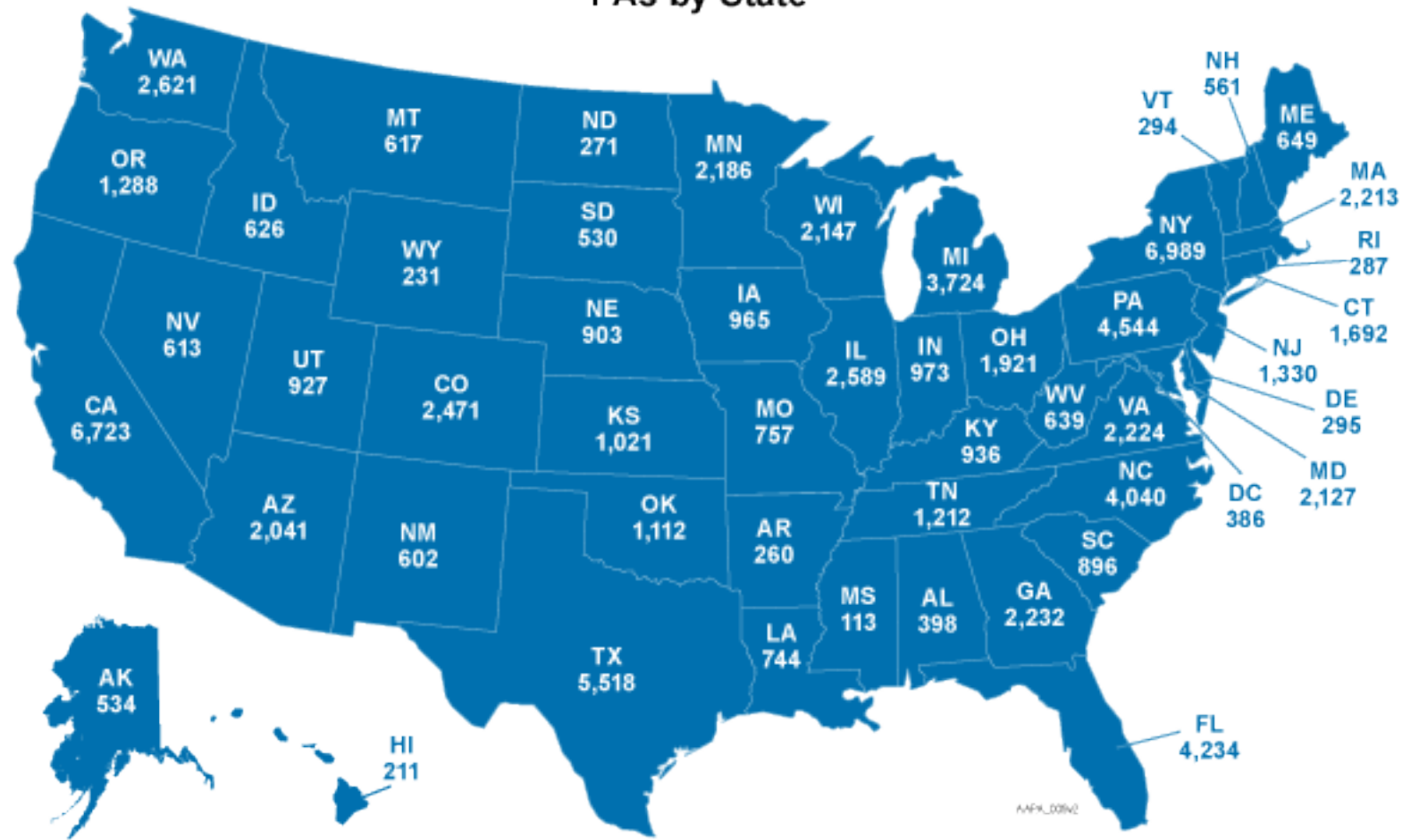
# PA-C – Who, What, Why, Where, How?

# What Is A Physician Assistant?

- ▶ A licensed healthcare professional qualified by didactic and clinical education and training to practice medicine with in association with licensed physicians and surgeons.
    - Certified by National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistant
    - Licensed to practice in all states, and District of Columbia
    - Licensed to prescribe in all states, and D.C.
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# PA's Practice in All States

PAs by State

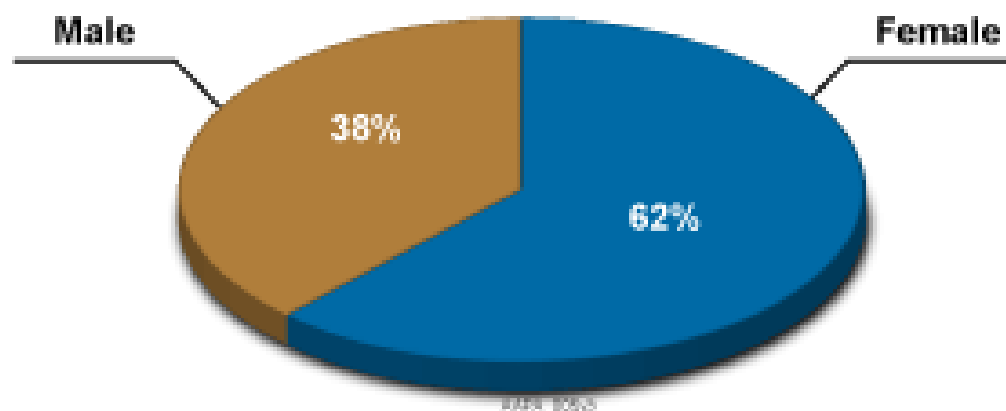


# Who Are PA's?

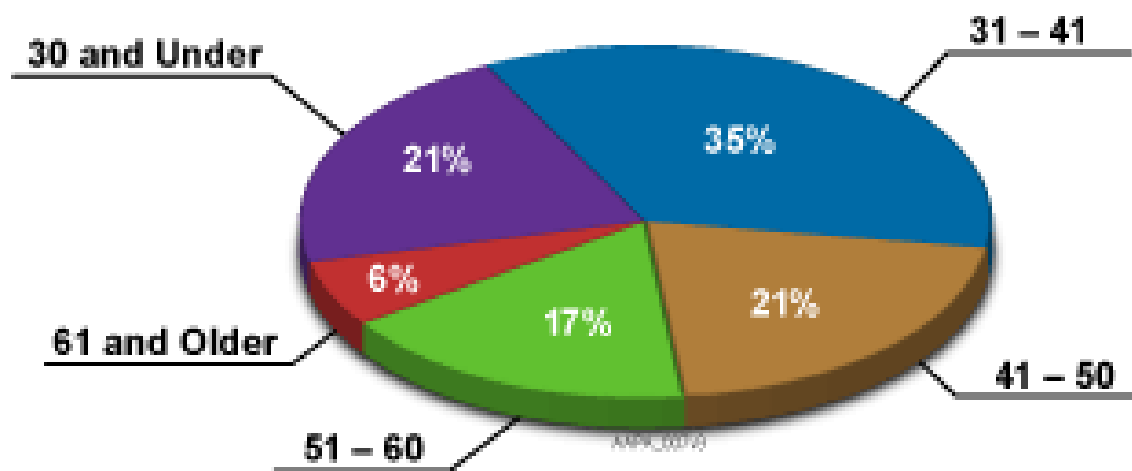
- ▶ Good students with an aptitude for the sciences, and an interest in health care
- ▶ Graduates of master's programs in physician assistant studies
- ▶ May come from other health care fields, or not
  - Board-certified by NCCPA
  - Licensed and regulated by state medical boards




## Gender of the PA Profession



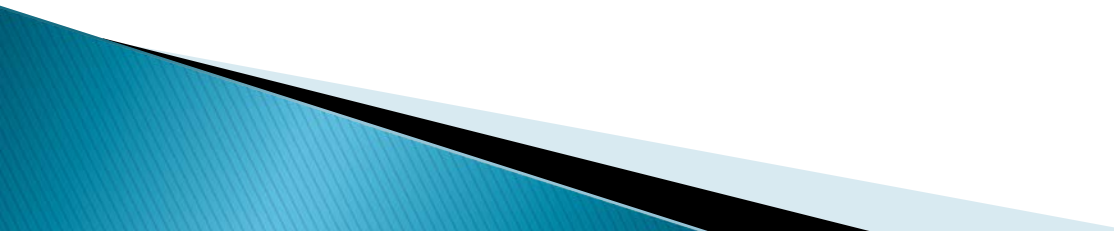
## Age Breakdown



# What Do PA's Do?

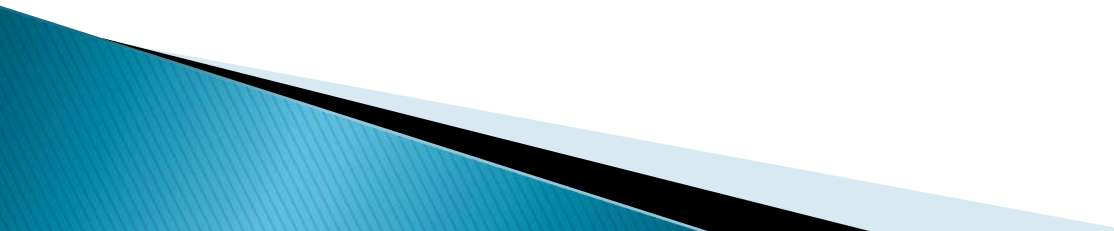
- ▶ Take medical histories; perform physical exams
  - ▶ Diagnose and treat acute illness and injury
  - ▶ Medically manage chronic conditions
  - ▶ Order and interpret diagnostic studies
  - ▶ Prescribe medications
  - ▶ Assist at surgery; provide pre-and-post-operative care
  - ▶ Educate patients on managing their conditions, taking medications, following diet, etc.
- 

# So...How Is That Different From What A Physician Does?

- ▶ Physicians are licensed by the state to set up their own independent practices, seeing such patients as choose to come to them
  - ▶ Physicians may be totally responsible for both the medical and business aspects of practice, functioning as independent contractors
  - ▶ PA's work within the practice of a licensed physician, or group of physicians. We care for only those patients who are part of that practice, and within guidelines set by our employing physician
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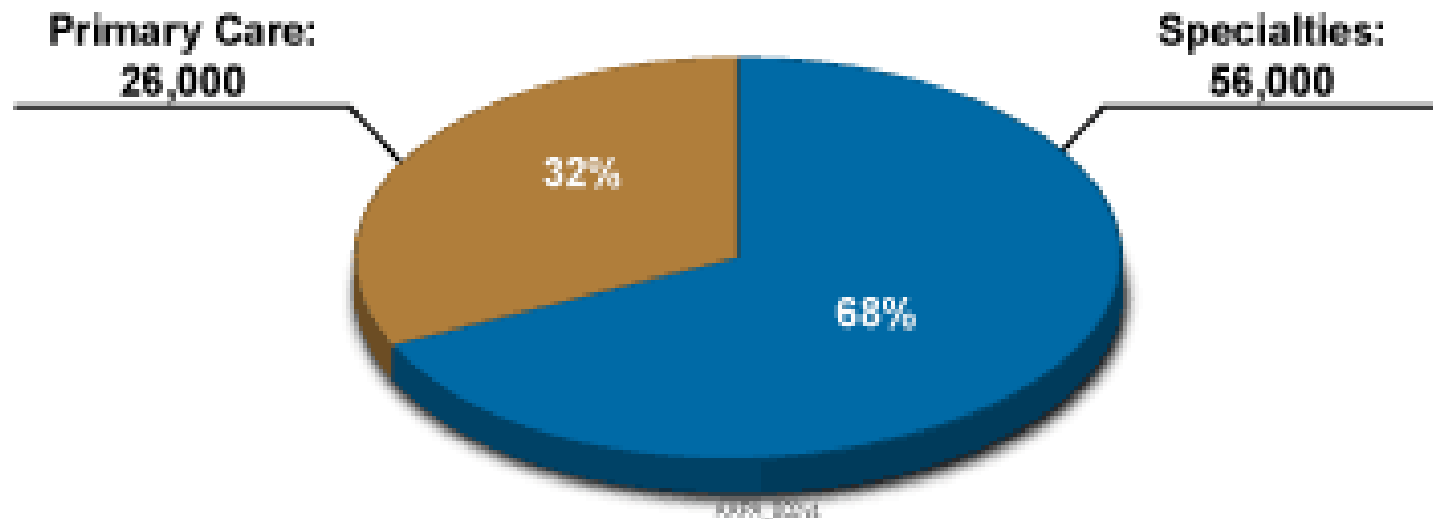


# The Physician and the PA: A Team

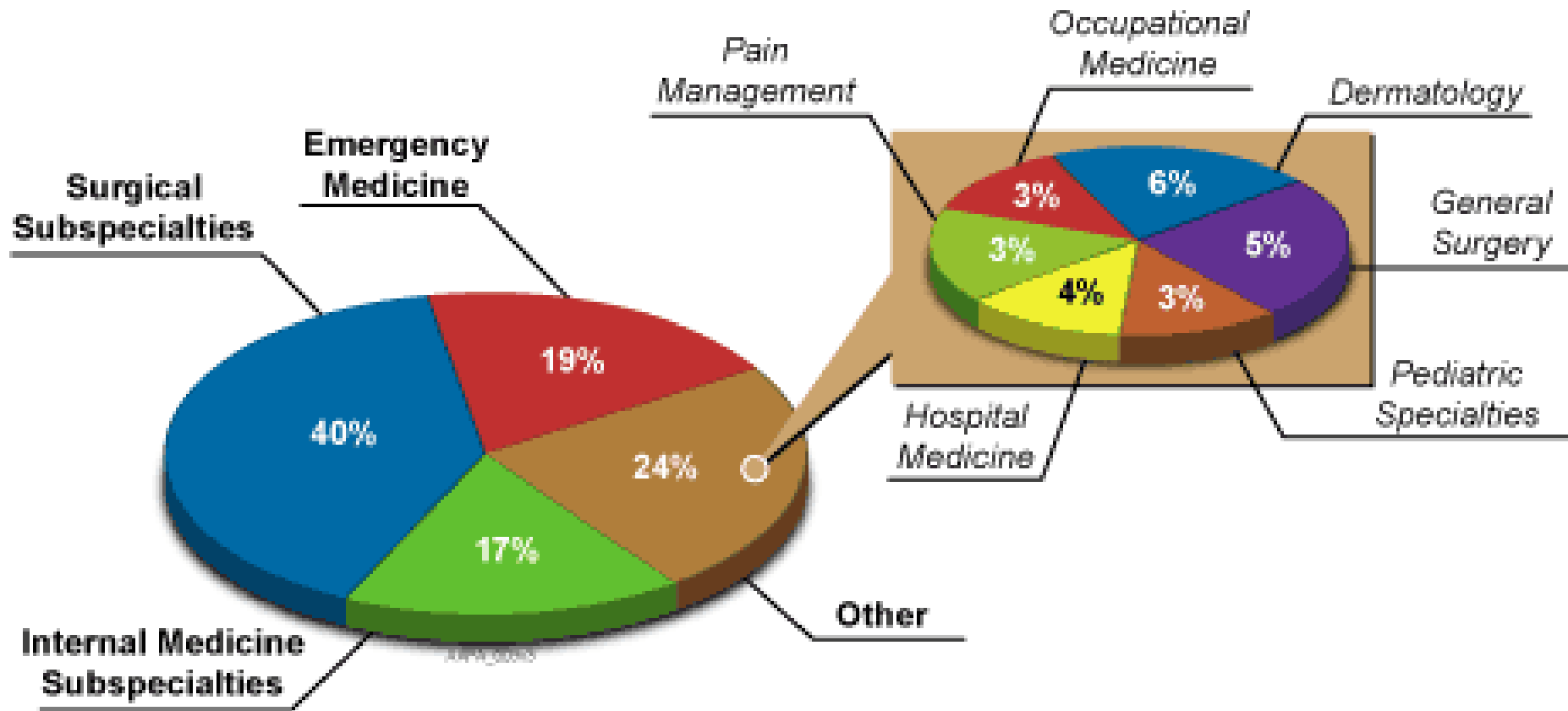
- ▶ The employing physician knows the PA's education, and competencies; the PA is comfortable with the knowledge, skill, and professionalism of the physician
  - ▶ PA's "job description" developed by mutual agreement
  - ▶ Physician does not have to be physically present; accessibility is what's required
  - ▶ PA-physician relationship one of mutual respect and trust
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# Where PA's Practice

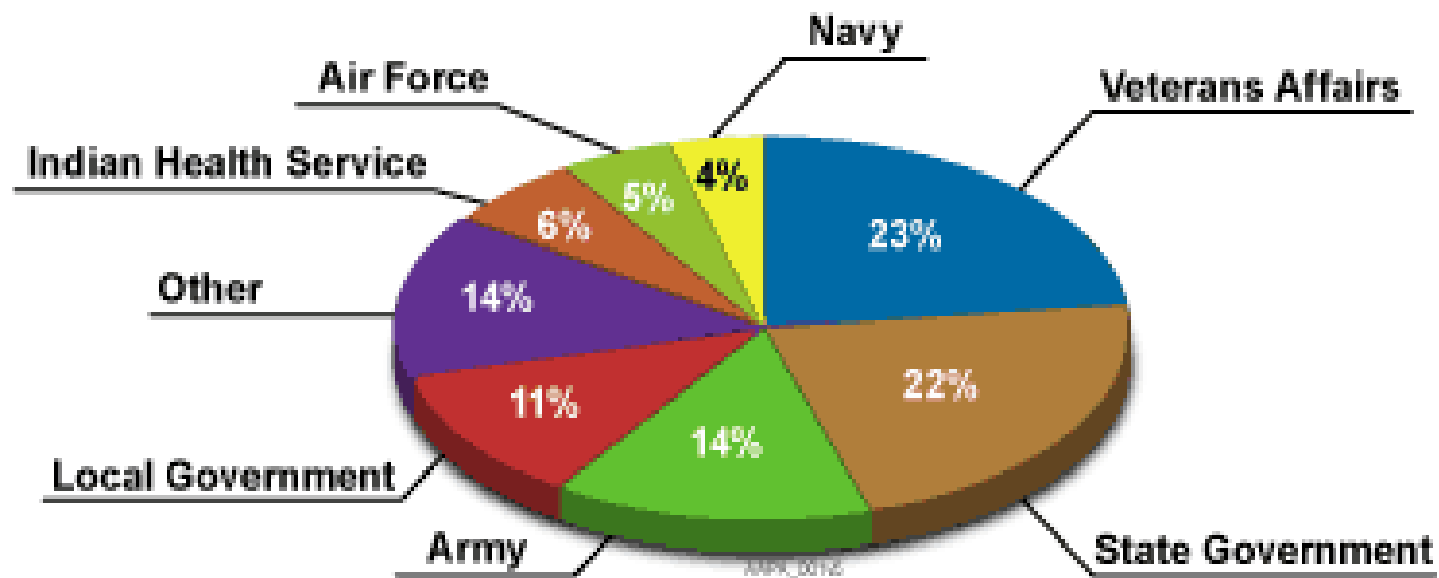
## PA's in Primary Care and Specialties



# PA<sup>s</sup> in Specialties



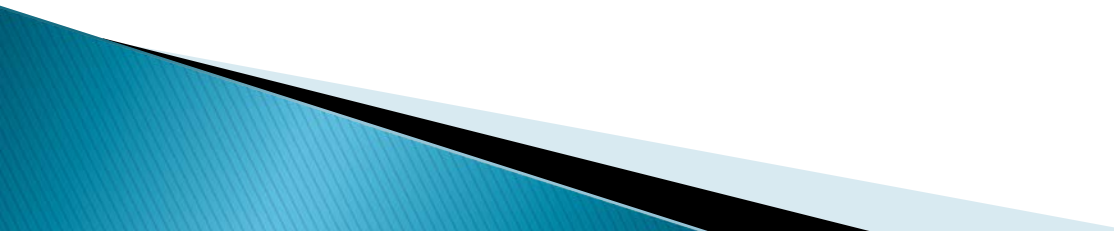
## PAAs in Government



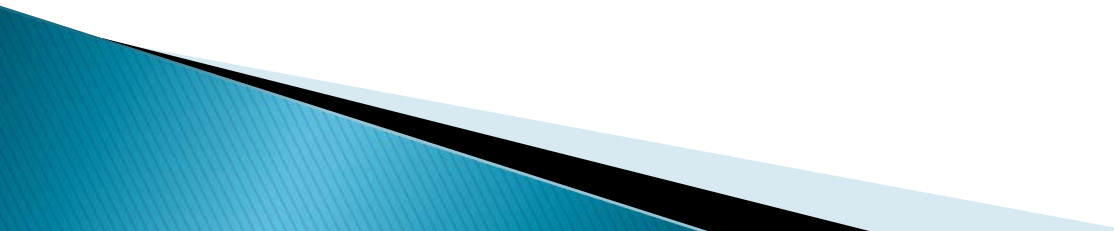
# Becoming A PA

- ▶ What do you need?
  - Aptitude for and enjoyment of the sciences
  - Good study habits; self-discipline
  - Good time management skills
  - Good oral and written communication skills
- ▶ Choose a college major that includes courses required by PA programs for admission
  - 8 hrs. biology; 8 hrs. general chemistry; 8 hrs. anatomy & physiology; 4–8 hrs. organic chemistry; 4 hrs. biochemistry; 12–15 hrs. psychology; + general education classes

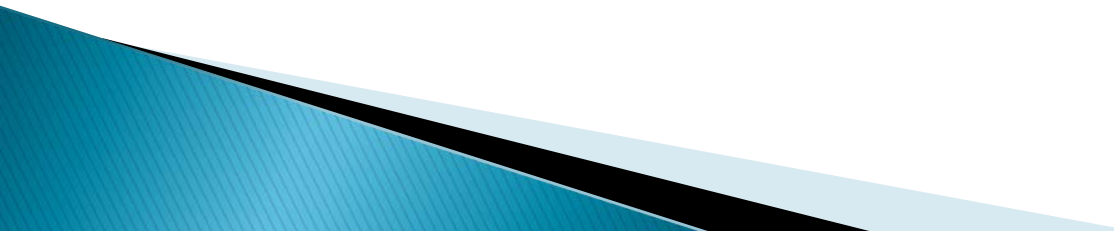
# It's Not "Easy" to Be Accepted to PA School

- ▶ There are just 170 accredited programs in US
  - ▶ Class sizes range from 16 to 60+
  - ▶ Accredited programs are housed in various institutions:
    - Large, state-supported universities
    - Private colleges and universities of various sizes
    - Faith-based colleges and Universities (few)
  - ▶ Overall GPA 3.5 or higher; science GPA 3.4+
  - ▶ Most (not all) require GRE
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# PA Education Is Not Inexpensive

- ▶ Average cost:
    - Public colleges/universities: \$31,210
    - Private colleges/universities: \$65,573
    - Books and equipment: approx. \$2500
  - ▶ Scholarships and grants are available; 89–95% of PA students receive some aid
  - ▶ Newly certified PA's typically earn \$85,000+, so loan repayment is quite feasible
  - ▶ A medical education is “worth” a short-term debt
- 

# Length and Content of Programs

- ▶ Most PA programs are 27 months in length; there are a few that are 36 months
  - ▶ Breaks are few, and short (no more summers off...)
  - ▶ The first half of programs consist of intense medical education (principles of medicine, pharmacology, clinical skills)
  - ▶ Second half: clinical rotations and specialties: pediatrics, ob-gyn, orthopedics, surgery, emergency medicine; internal medicine, etc.)
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# White Coats to Green Hoods

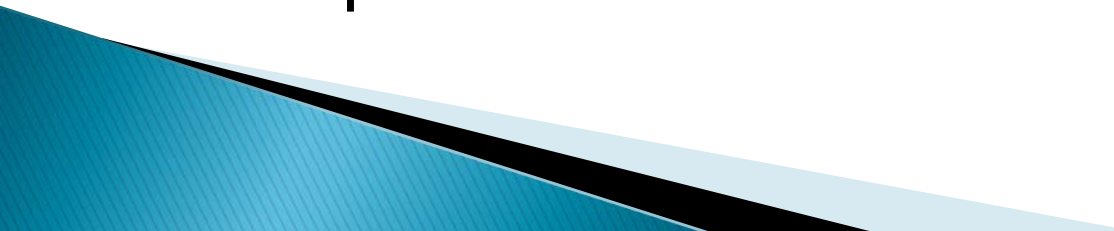


# After Graduation Comes “Boards”

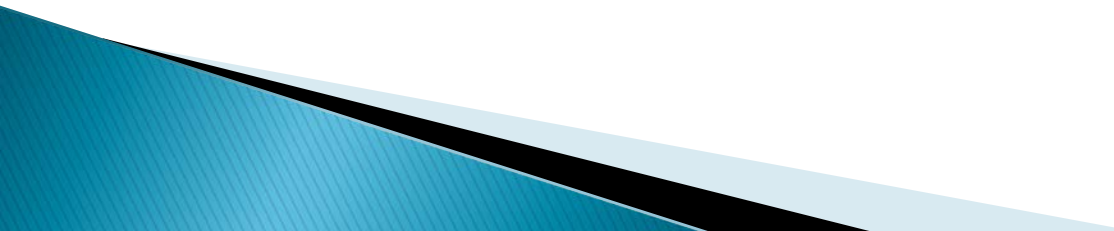


- ▶ National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants
- ▶ To be eligible, one must graduate from an accredited PA program
- ▶ All states require passing boards for licensure
- ▶ Certification maintained by cycles of CME, and passing re-certification exam every 6 years

# PA Practice Governance

- ▶ Licensure typically by state's medical board
    - Applicant must apply, provide proof of graduation from accredited program, and proof of having passed NCCPA exam
    - Certificate to prescribe requires separate application, and proof of specific pharmacology education
  - ▶ Must maintain certification to maintain licensure
  - ▶ “Quality control” for patients – PA's are competent
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# PA Profession Still “New”

- ▶ 1960 – shortage of primary care physicians, leaving many rural areas and small towns without access to care
  - ▶ 1961 – Dr. Charles Hudson publishes an article in JAMA calling for a “mid-level” clinician capable of handling many medical problems
  - ▶ 1965 – Dr. Eugene Stead establishes first “physician assistant” program at Duke University
  - ▶ Four ex-Navy corpsman first class; 3 graduated and entered practice in 1967
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# Duke University: First PA Students

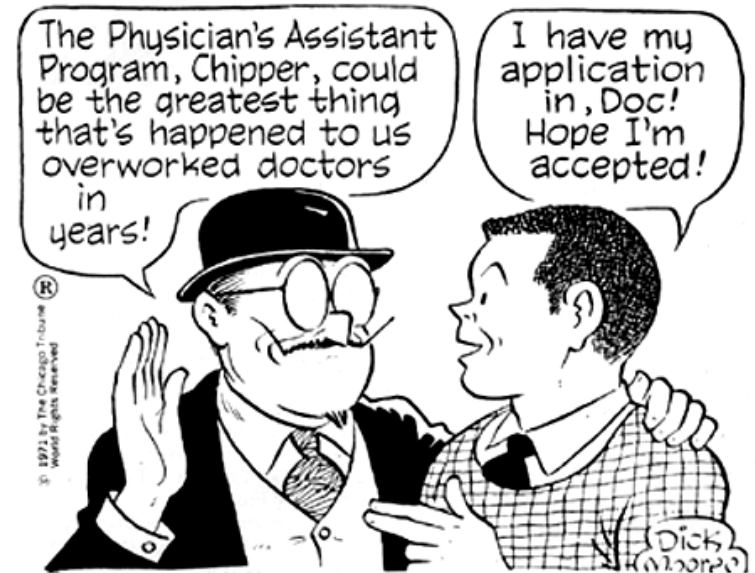
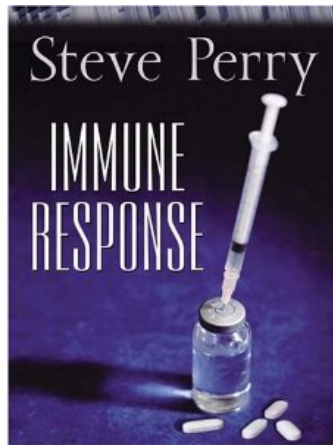


# The “Maturing” of a Profession

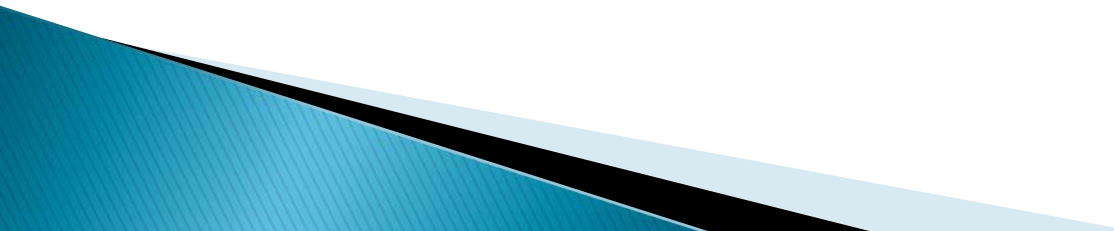
- ▶ From 4 PA's in 1967 to 100,000+ today
  - ▶ From one program at Duke to 170 programs today; more in the works
  - ▶ Rigorous program accreditation standards
  - ▶ Rigorous entry-level and continuing certification standards
  - ▶ Professional organizations and publications
  - ▶ Residency programs for specialized training
  - ▶ Excellent patient acceptance
  - ▶ **An altogether GREAT profession!!!!!!**
- 



# Profession Becomes Part of the Culture



# Why Consider the PA Profession?

- ▶ Demand is high, and will increase
  - ▶ Physician and patient acceptance is good
  - ▶ Time and cost for education less than for becoming a physician
  - ▶ Affords satisfactions of medical practice without all of the “non-medical concerns”
    - Office and staff; insurance negotiations; endless administrative details
  - ▶ Affords more freedom for personal/family life
  - ▶ Respected profession; well-compensated
- 



# Places to Learn More

- ▶ Visit these websites
    - [www.aapa.org](http://www.aapa.org)
    - [www.ohiopa.com](http://www.ohiopa.com)
    - [www.nccpa.net](http://www.nccpa.net)
  - ▶ Locate physician assistants in your community and talk with them
  - ▶ Contact programs in the immediate area
    - Kettering College – Kettering, Ohio
    - Ohio Dominican – Columbus, Ohio
    - U. of Findlay – Findlay, Ohio
    - Marietta College – Marietta, Ohio
    - University of Dayton – Dayton, Ohio
- 